UNITED NATIONS

ST

Secretariat

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INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: 1991 COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY OF STAFF MEMBERS FROM OTHER CATEGORIES

1. In accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/370 and Add.1, the following information is provided on the format and procedures for the 1991 competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories. As noted in that instruction, the following occupational groups have been selected:

(a) Administration, which covers work such as that of administrative officers, personnel officers, budget officers and project management officers;

(b) Economics, which covers work such as that of economists, specialists in transnational corporations and specialists in industrial development;

(c) Electronic data processing, which covers work such as that of programme analysts, systems analysts and systems programmers;

(d) Engineering, architecture and related work, which covers work such as that of architects and engineers;

(e) Finance, which covers work such as that of accountants, auditors and finance officers;

(f) Legal and related matters, which covers work such as that of legal researchers and advisors for the Organization;

(g) Social development, which covers work such as that of social welfare and humanitarian affairs officers;

(h) Statistics, which covers work such as that of statisticians and demographers.

A. Written examination

2. The written examination accounts for 80 per cent of the total number of points available for each occupational group and will consist of two parts: a general paper (four hours) and a specialized paper (four hours) related to the occupational group concerned. An examination booklet will be distributed to the candidates at the beginning of each part of the examination. The examination must be written with dark blue or black pen only in the designated parts of each booklet.

3. The general paper comprises three sections:

(a) Section 1 will test candidates' ability to analyse a problem. This section consists of a text and questions based on the text. The time recommended for this section is 1 hour and 20 minutes and it has a coefficient of 10 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination;

(b) Section 2 consists of a text of a speech or a report. Candidates will be asked to summarize the text, reducing it to approximately one third of its length. The summary will be evaluated for comprehension, accuracy and clarity of thought. The time recommended for this section is 1 hour and 20 minutes and it has a coefficient of 10 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination;

(c) Section 3 deals with questions on international relations. Candidates may choose any 10 among 12 questions offered. The time recommended for this section is 1 hour and 10 minutes and it has a coefficient of 10 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination.

4. The specialized paper, which tests substantive knowledge of the occupational group concerned, consists of 3 essay-type exercises and 10 short-answer type questions. All essays and questions are mandatory. The total time recommended for this part is four hours and it has a coefficient of 50 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination.

5. As stated in paragraph 25 of administrative instruction ST/AI/370, candidates participating in the examination shall be permitted to take the examination in any of the working languages of the regional commissions, with due regard to the requirement of proficiency in one of the working languages of the Secretariat. In order to demonstrate such proficiency, all candidates will have to take section 2 (drafting test) in either English or French. Alternatively, candidates may elect to take the entire written examination (parts 1 and 2) in a working language of a commission other than English or French and to sit for a special language test in either English or French. This test consists of two parts covering, respectively, reading and writing

abilities. The duration of the test is 2 hours and 30 minutes. The special language test will be administered on the most appropriate date, taking into account cost and the schedule of the specialized examinations of the candidates convoked. All candidates taking the test will be informed of the special test date in their letter of convocation.

6. The exact time of the examinations will be adjusted for each examination centre, taking into account the various time zones, and will be communicated to each candidate. Candidates should arrive at the examination room in each centre at least half an hour in advance of the scheduled starting time and have with them a United Nations identification document, their convocation letter and pens.

7. The written examinations will be held in the designated examination centres for the occupations mentioned in paragraph 1 on the following dates:

Social development	10 September
Administration	11 September
General paper	12 September
Economics	16 September
Finance	16 September
Electronic data processing	19 September
Legal and related matters	To be announced
Statistics	To be announced
Engineering, architecture and related work	To be announced
Special language test	To be announced

B. Oral examination

8. Candidates may be convoked for an oral examination in accordance with paragraph 15 of administrative instruction ST/AI/370. Candidates serving at duty stations away from Headquarters will take this part of the examination either in New York or at another location, depending on circumstances. At locations away from Headquarters, the oral examination will be conducted by a board consisting of at least three members of the relevant board of examiners, including an ex officio member.

9. The oral examination is scheduled to be held in March 1992.

10. Candidates will take the oral examination either in English or French, the working languages of the Secretariat, in accordance with the preference stated in their original application. The oral examination accounts for 20 per cent of the total number of points available.

11. The standardized format of the oral examination will include a 5- to 10-minute presentation of a general nature on a topic broadly related to the occupational group concerned. Each candidate will draw two topics at random from a selection prepared in advance and choose one of the topics. The candidate will then have 15 minutes to prepare an oral presentation on the selected topic. Following the presentation, the Board of Examiners will have an opportunity to ask three questions for clarification or amplification of any of the points made by the candidate. After the presentation and related questions, the Board will ask seven other questions of a general nature also broadly related to the occupation.

12. The presentation and responses to the questions of the oral examination will be evaluated in accordance with a rating scale designed to assess the candidate's ability to comprehend topics and questions, to communicate with others and to present and illustrate with examples his or her views in a clear, logical and understandable way. In order to ensure consistency, the marking will be done separately by each member of the Board immediately after each oral examination and without relation to the grading of the written examination. The presentation will account for 45 per cent of the points assigned to the oral examination, the answers to the requests for clarification or amplification for 15 per cent and the answers to the seven other questions for 40 per cent.